

PLACE
STAMP
HERE

YOUR GUIDE TO CHOOSING CHILD CARE





Your child care choice is your most important consumer decision. At stake are your child's happiness and well-being ...and your peace

of mind. When you buy a car or washing machine, you shop around, compare quality and prices, ask questions and talk to other people using the product as you use it. When you choose child care, follow the same steps.

Gather all the information you can beforehand. Do comparative shopping and continue to evaluate the child care after you've enrolled your child. It's important to be informed.

Your child is worth it!

Changing child care arrangements is confusing to a child, so make a wise choice at the start. Give yourself and your child time to get used to the caregiver. If you must change child care programs, there should be good reason for doing so. You may decide to change child care in order to meet your child's different growth needs or because the quality of care is poor. When choosing child care do the following:

Information provided by Child Care Aware™

Look.

Begin by visiting several child care homes or centers. Visit more than once, at different times of the day to look at what goes on. The child care environment should be safe, clean and attractive. It may look a little cluttered, but it should not be dirty. See if toys and equipment are stored at a child's level, and that medicine and cleaning products are out of reach. Look for different kinds of play activities that fit your child's age. See if the caregivers enjoy talking and playing with the children.



Listen.

Find out what the child care setting sounds like. Listen for children who sound happy and involved and caregivers who sound cheerful and patient. A place that is too quiet may mean not enough activity. A place that is too noisy may mean there is a lack of control.

Count.

Count the number of children in the group. Count the number of staff members caring for them. A small number of children for each adult is important, especially for babies and younger children.



Ask.

Ask about the background training and experience of all staff. Ask how they handle safety, nutrition, discipline and activities. Ask to see the policy on setting limits and handling problem behaviors. Find out if the program is accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) or if the provider meets high-quality local or national standards. Quality care providers will be happy to answer your questions.

Be informed.

Wisconsin state law requires child care providers to obtain a license when caring for four or more unrelated children under age seven. This does not include relatives caring for your children or a babysitter who comes into your home. The licensing rules set standards for adequate care to protect children's health, safety and well-being. A copy of these rules should be available at every licensed child care facility. If you see alleged violations at a licensed child care program, report them to the nearest licensing field office.

Certification applies to family child care providers caring for up to three unrelated children. An additional three children may be cared for in some cases. Complaints about certified care should go to the county or tribal human services offices.

Quality child care for your child depends on both you and the caregiver. Share information with the caregiver about your child's needs, interests, problems, personality and anything else that will help the caregiver provide the best care for your child.

If the caregiver has concerns about your child, listen without being defensive and be willing to talk it over. Both you and the caregiver want to help your child grow to be a happy, caring, whole human being.

For More Information on Child Care...

Local CCR&R agencies offer child care choices for your infant, toddler, preschooler, or school-age child.

To reach any one of 17 child care resource and referral agencies in Wisconsin, call toll-free:

1-888-713-KIDS (5437)

or e-mail us at

info@wisconsinccrr.org

Visit our web site at

www.wisconsinccrr.org



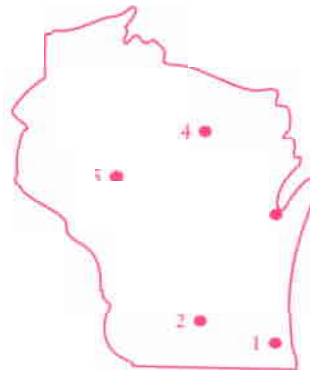
To order additional copies of this brochure, contact the **Child Care Information Center (CCIC)** at 1-800-362-7353.

Prepared by the Wisconsin CCR&R Network, Inc.
for the state Office of Child Care.

Certification Offices

For names of Child Care certifiers in county and tribal human services departments, or for more information about certification, call (608) 261-4580.

Licensing Field Offices Locations and Phone Numbers



- 1 Southeastern Office, Waukesha (262) 521-5100
- 2 Southern Office, Madison (608) 243-2400
- 3 Northeastern Office, Green Bay (920) 448-5312
- 4 Northern Office, Rhinelander (715) 365-2500
- 5 Western Office, Eau Claire (715) 836-2174



State of Wisconsin
Department of Workforce Development

DWSW-11064-P (R. 03/2003)

Making child care work for Wisconsin families